



Country Meeting on

Non-Tariff Measures as Barriers to Intra-South Asia Trade: Bangladesh Case

**Saturday 03, February 2013
Hotel Royal International, Khulna, Bangladesh**

Organized by
Unnayan Shamannay



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1. Introduction

A country meeting was held on “Non-Tariff Measures as Barriers to Intra-South Asia Trade: Bangladesh Case” organized by Unnayan Shamannay on 03 February 2013 at Hotel Royal International, Khulna, Bangladesh. Mr. Shaheen ul Alam, Project Coordinator of Unnayan Shamannay coordinated the meeting while the Dean of Business Administration school of Khulna University Prof. ATM Jahiruddin, Deputy General Manager of Foreign Exchange Division at Bangladesh Bank Khulna Branch Mr. Samir Kumar Biswas, and Senior Vice President of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI), Mr. SK Asadur Rahman attended the meeting as guests of honor. Directors of KCCI, representatives from Export Promotion Bureau, Khulna City Corporation, L/C opening banks, income tax office, Khulna University and civil society representative attended the meeting. The meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Shaheen ul Alam of Unnayan Shamannay. Dr. Mahfuz Kabir, trade expert, presented the summary of research findings. After the presentation the floor was open. Then the guests of honor brought their articulated speech and the meeting came to an end by the closing remarks of the coordinator.



2. Welcome Address

Mr. Shaheen ul Alam

Project Coordinator, Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh

Mr. Alam expressed his gratitude to the audience for their representation in Khulna. He then briefed about the project output and specifically the objective of the country meeting in Khulna. Mr. Alam said that so far, the researchers can find data and information from documented materials, which could be more or less dissimilar to the actual field. The businessmen and other related stakeholders can articulately speak about the non-tariff barriers they can face.



3. Keynote Presentation

Dr Mahfuz Kabir

Trade Expert

Dr Kabir, at the outset of his presentation, spoke about Bangladesh's trade with South Asia and general non-tariff measures that usually the business people face in South Asia region. Then he brought the broad categories of non-tariff barriers and generally prevailed NTMs in South Asia and these were followed by country specific NTMs and NTMs in Bangladesh-India trade. The recent problems for Bangladesh-India trade was stated then with NTMs in SAFTA. He said the major problems are 'Gate Pass' for Bangladeshi vehicles to enter India, bonded warehouse issue, shipment related problems in Agartala port, customs related problems and sheds for loading-unloading in the port area. The businessmen can save at least 15% of their costs and 148 hours time if the avoidable non-tariff measures could be avoided. For Bangladeshi, product to Nepal, business visa fee is very high, which is NC 60,000 for six month multiple-entry business visa whereas Indians need no visa to enter Nepal. He urged to reduce such discrimination. Finally, the export potential and NTMs for Bangladeshi product to Nepal were mentioned.



4. Open Discussion

Kazi Masudul Islam

Director, KCCI

India does not give multiple-entry visa for businessmen. The India-Bangladesh Chamber can influence the Bangladesh government in favor of their businessmen where as the FBCCI cannot do so. Therefore FBCCI should take necessary steps getting multiple-entry visa by the businessmen.



Mr. Ziaul Haque

Director, KCCI

Visa days are counted when it is issued which in some cases create problem as businessmen cannot often enter India on the stated date of visa. Sometimes, Bangladeshi businessmen have to import some low valued complementary items with some important items, e.g., importing of plastic tools is must with IPS. The plastic tools are of very low quality and Bangladesh is competent of producing very high quality plastic items. In that case, some businessmen are discouraged to import IPS from India.



Mr. Jaminur Rahman

Senior Principal Officer, Foreign Exchange Department, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, Khulna Branch

There are a number of countries where Bangladesh's products specifically cosmetics and RMG products enter but Bangladeshi exporters of these



products cannot export to South Asian countries. Bangladeshi importers need to have an L/C to import from other countries whereas Indian importers do not necessarily need that; they can do business in contract. If Bangladeshi importers can import against contract, they can provide goods in lower prices. Bangladeshi exporters often cannot make documents up to international standards, which sometimes create problems regarding getting payment in proper time.

Prof. ATM Jahiruddin

Dean, Business Administration School, Khulna University



SAARC member countries need to come forward to meet the economic objective beside political objectives of the formation of SAARC so that consumers in this territory can get benefit of forming such alliance.

Mr. Samir Kumar Biswas

Deputy General Manager (Foreign Exchange Division), Bangladesh Bank, Khulna



Business people often cannot fill the documents correctly but if the L/C opening bank officials concentrate properly then it would not create any problem regarding documentation. Some regarding documentation workshops can be arranged by commercial banks where all the stakeholders would participate and get proper knowledge.



Recommendations from Open Discussion

- ✓ Multiple-entry visa problem with India could be solved.
- ✓ Visa days are counted when it is issued; this is a problem for businessmen. It should be from the day people enter to another country.
- ✓ Bangladeshi cosmetics and RMGs are exported to European Union but not in SAFTA especially in India. There for concern businessmen should take necessary steps to export such product to India.
- ✓ Bangladeshi importers must need an L/C to import goods from outside but Indian importers do not necessarily need it.
- ✓ If goods are imported by contract, trade volume could be increased.
- ✓ Custom officials should be fair.
- ✓ Businesspeople should be more conscious about documentation
- ✓ For shrimp import, Indian importer should get hassle-free environment.
- ✓ Positive political will and reduction of corruption could enhance trade in SAFTA region.
- ✓ Bangladeshi products are more appropriate in North East India comparing other parts of India. So, businessmen should target these areas.

- ✓ Anti dumping problem should be resolved

5. Concluding Remarks

Dr Mahfuz Kabir

If there is non-tariff measures, price of the products become higher and consumers become the losers. Because of documentation problems, we are becoming losers so businessmen should be more conscious about the matter. Bangladesh Bank should take some training programs for the businessmen for appropriate documentation.

List of Participants

1. **Engr. Monoranjan Biswas**, Director, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Khulna
2. **Md. Faruque Hossain Talukdar**, Chief License Officer, Khulna City Corporation, Khulna
3. **Sk. Sharafat Hossen**, Assistant Prof., Economics Discipline, Khulna University
4. **Sultana Nargis**, Sr. Executive Officer, Janata Bank Ltd. Khulna
5. **Alhaj Md. Moshrraf Hossain**, Director, KCCI, Khulna
6. **Ruhul Amin**, SEO, Sonali Bank Ltd, Khulna Corporate Branch, Khulna
7. **L.A. Matin**, Civil Society, Khulna
8. **Md. Forhad Abbas**, Civil Society, Khulna
9. **Advocate Mr. Golam Rasul Gazi**, General Secretary, Khulna Income Tax Advocate Association, Khulna
10. **Sachindra Nath Podder**, Income Tax Advocate, Khulna.
11. **Hafizur Rahman Choudary**, License Officer, Khulna City Corporation, Khulna
12. **Md. Sk. Emanul Haque**, Executive Officer, Sonali Bank, Khulna Corporate Branch, Khulna
13. **S. M. Obaidullah**, Director, KCCI, Khulna
14. **Shah Mohammed Nurulla**, SEO, Janata Bank, Khulna
15. **Abul Bashar Patoary**, Director, KCCI, Khulna.
16. **Samir Kumar Bisswas**, DGM, Bangladesh Bank, Khulna.
17. **Advocate Mr. Mohasin Kabir Dulu**, Income Tax Advocate, Tax Bhaban, Khulna
18. **Ziaul Haque**, MD, Seraj Traders, Khulna
19. **Khan Saiful Islam**, Director, KCCI, Khulna.
20. **Md. Mahabub Hansan**, SRA, Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka.
21. **Nazrul Islam**, SRA, Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka.
22. **Advocate M Feroz Ahmed**, Civil Society, Khulna
23. **Md. Jaminur Rahman**, Senior Principal Officer, Islamic Bank Bangladesh Ltd., Khulna Branch, Khulna
24. **Mehedi Hasan Md. Hefzur Rahman**, Associate Professor, Business Administration Discipline, Khulna University
25. **Humayan Kabir Boby**, Civil Society, Khulna
26. **Md. Hafizul Islam Chandan**, Director, Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Khulna
27. **Mr. Shaikh Asadur Rahman**, Senior Vice President, KCCI, Khulna
28. **Shaheb Ali**, Staff Reporter, Dainik Purbanchal, Khulna
29. **Md. Elayash**, ED, MS Traders, Khulna
30. **Prof. Dr. ATM Jahiruddin**, Dean, Management & Business Administration School, Khulna University, Khulna
31. **Shaheen ul Alam**, PC, Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka.
32. **Dr Mahfuz Kabir**, trade expert, Dhaka.

33. **Zahirul Alam**, SS, Unnayan Shamannay, Dhaka.
34. **Mr. Sazzadur Rahim Pantha**, Civil Society, Khulna.
35. **Mr. Kazi Masudul Islam**, Director, KCCI, Khulna
36. **M. Nurul Islam**, Treasurer, Mongla Custom House, Khulna
37. **A.K.M. Azharul Islam**, Admin Officer, Uttaran, Khulna.
38. **Zihadul Kabir**, License Inspector, Khulna City Corporation, Khulna
39. **Mr. Zakir Ahmed**, Assistant Director, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Khulna
40. **Md. Aminul Islam**, Director, KCCI, Khulna.